

## School Board Meetings . . .

remember you have been called to Kingdom work. You only need to know twenty percent of the material eighty percent of the time. Your decisions have consequences which not only affect your school and students now, but for eternity. You are a workman who needs to be properly prepared in order to bring glory to God in your board meetings and in your school. I would encourage each board member to buy a copy of *Robert's Rules*, read it, and apply it to your meetings in order to facilitate orderly meetings for the glory of God.

### NOTES

1. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 10th ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Publishing, 2000), p. 6.

All Scripture cited:  
*The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

## Timely and Wise Decision Making

by Ron Lee, Schaeffer Academy

The Christian school board is a crucible where the notions of secular vs. sacred collide. The school is a business entity and must meet the pressing demands of staying afloat with a positive

decisions which may prompt you to want to wait until the next meeting and even cause you to lose sleep, yet for the vast majority of the issues that come before the board, a decision just needs to

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cash flow while making fair, viable and consistent policies which embody Christian charity toward its neighbor. The weight of decision making can produce heat and pressure in this environment. How can a group of diverse individuals refine and fuse their ideas into policies that benefit the school, without getting burned?

Procrastination is a formidable foe and one that can afflict the board decision-making process. We have all heard the adage, "Why do today what can be put off until tomorrow?" Our own personal and professional demands may contribute to this, but more often than not, we can procrastinate on board decisions because we place great value upon the work that needs to be accomplished by the board. The decisions you make influence such a broad and demanding clientele that they must be "just right." The selection of property or the final wording of a policy must be perfect since so much of the school's future is riding on it. These are major

be made. Even when you've done all of your "homework" there is sometimes no perfect answer. We ultimately must remember that we are finite individuals and all of our decisions must be made on the basis of good research, counsel and most of all, faith. To help overcome our battle with procrastination, we need to rest a greater confidence on our God. The verses in Hebrews 11: 1, 6 encourage us to abide in this truth, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

"School board members must be visionaries." We have all heard that to be successful your board must include individuals who wear that mantle. Visionaries not only help you dream big for your school, but also they can help you to foresee difficulties and be proactive in order to ease the decision-making process. Just

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think a moment of the various things that could go wrong at your school: a student accused of drug possession, student pregnancy, teacher insubordination, unpaid tuition, financial deficits and student attrition issues. These are real and not extreme cases, and are some of the risks facing your school. Considering the risks and creating policies in advance of crises is an attribute of being a visionary. Taking the initiative and prior action reduces conflict when your school would otherwise be caught unaware.

When the risk topic is discussed prior to the incident, personalities and individual relationships to the “perpetrator” do not need to cloud your judgment. You can be spared, or at least acquitted, of the accusation of favoritism or vendetta. It also allows you to provide policies that are more positive in approach, rather than punitive. For instance, when considering fundraising, rather than denying the ideas that others are currently promoting, you can list those activities which the school would support. You have created a boundary for people to work within and have limited the chance for offense.

Having greater time to create a policy or make a decision relieves the pressure, reduces the chance for error and increases the confidence in the action. A presumably well-written policy can have unforeseen implications. When creating policies under time constraints, a certain “loophole” or “situation” may never be considered and you could end up with a worse situation on your hands than the issue you were originally trying to resolve. Having a proactive approach to decision making can allow more time to

create a policy. That extra time allows you to perform extended research, obtain counsel and even vet the draft policy with others before final implementation.

All of your decisions must be from a principled approach. The Bible speaks to many of the circumstances which the board must address. Even in those instances where the Bible does not provide explicit instruction, you can derive implicit direction. Such exercises require discernment and application of a Christian worldview, thinking redemptively and casting your thoughts to ultimate purposes. Rereading your mission statement, statement of faith, statement of purpose and your school history can help provide the fuel necessary to reignite your passion and vision for your school, and can reorient your decisions.

Even though it is not a defined board responsibility, an underlying objective is to please a variety of people. The intrinsic existence of the school is dependent upon how well it provides services that fulfill the expectations of the parents and students. The implementation of sound policies and the application of astute business savvy are vital in sustaining that trust, confidence and rapport. We can easily get caught up in the anxieties which accompany that pressure to perform. Seeking people’s approval can take its toll on your vigor. In our fallen world, the realities of this task may seem impossible and the school board member may wither from the heat of this crucible. In the book, *The Call*, Os Guinness does not negate our responsibilities to such an audience; rather, he passionately redirects us to focus our attention to “one audience that trumps all others—the Audience

of One.” As you fulfill your call as a board member, may you make all your decisions under the banner and audience of the One. May He sustain you in the fiery furnace as He refines you and your board for His purposes.

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